1;Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

ing him, said '*bā kunyi*' (come, child). My informant, incensed at being called a 'child' by a low-caste Baṇṇa promptly slapped him. The term 'child' is normally used by an elder towards a youth, but only an elder of the same or equivalent or superior caste is entitled to this privilege, and not an elder of a low caste. My informant regarded the oracle as a Baṇṇa, and not as the ancestor of a friend: he had projected the normal structure into the ritual context. Needless to say he did not believe that a Coorg ancestor possessed a Baṇṇa oracle at an ancestor-propitiation.

The Baṇṇa normally occupies a low position in the hierarchy, but the fact that he is the master of the complicated technique of ancestor-propitiation, and that he is possessed by these spirits during the propitiation, temporarily put him in a high position. The contemporary decline of belief in ancestor-spirits, as well as the increasing lack of appeal of the mode of propitiation adopted by the Baṇṇa, have tended to confine him to the position normally occupied by him in the caste structure.

The Brahmin occupies the highest position in the hierarchy and is also the master of a highly complicated ritual technique. But in spite of this there is frequently a certain inconsistency between the positions occupied by him in ritual and secular contexts respectively. In secular affairs power is actually possessed by the man who has wealth and a large following, whatever his caste might be. But even he has to accord the Brahmin the highest place in ritual contexts. The complex relation prevailing between a wealthy and powerful Shūdra Hindu and his poor Brahmin priest comes to mind: the Brahmin is in the Shūdra's pay and protection, but still he has to be respected as a Brahmin and especially in ritual contexts. Where the Brahmin priest is also a scholar or holy man there does not seem to be any inconsistency between his ritual and secular roles.

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Caste has a tendency to stress horizontal ties. It unites members of the same caste living in different villages and distinguishes them from other castes in the same village. It is extremely unlike the village community in which members of different castes are united by certain common values and are marked off from other villages. The existence of feuds between villages in the past

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their palms together at the chest, and one asks the other '*saukhya*?' (happy?), and the other replies '*saukhya*' (happy).

Shri K. J. Chengappa tells me that, over fifty years ago, when he was a boy, he had to go on a walk every evening with his male cousins and elders. The boys walked, with their arms folded across their chests, several yards behind the elders.[1] They took care to speak in a low tone and to avoid laughing aloud. Young people had to behave very circumspectly in the presence of their elders: they were forbidden, for instance, to cross or stretch their legs before an elder.

A senior, let alone an elder, has to be addressed by the appropriate kinship term. It shows disrespect to address him by name. Even when one meets a senior who is not related he is addressed by a suitable kinship term. For instance, a very old man is addressed as 'grandfather', whereas someone only a few years senior to the speaker is addressed as 'elder brother'. An elder usually addresses a younger person by name, or by some term like 'child'. Two people address each other by name only when they are approximately equal in age and when there is some familiarity between them.

There is an important exception to the rule that an elder may address a younger person by name: a woman may not address her husband's younger brother by name, even if the latter is her junior by many years. In such a case the ancient Coorg rule, 'even a seventy-year-old woman should salute a seven-year-old boy', applies. Leviratic unions are preferred in Coorg, and this means that a woman's husband's younger brother might one day be her husband. And a husband may not be addressed by name. A man's wife uses the honorific plural towards him, whereas he uses the singular towards her.

Relatives who are placed in a position of respect are not addressed by name, but by the suitable kinship term. This is because calling a person by name is not regarded as consistent with putting him in a position of respect. A woman is required to show respect to her husband and to his younger brother who is her potential husband. She calls him *bava* (brother-in-law).

Respect for seniority or age is so deep-rooted in Coorgs that whenever they want to place a person in a position of honour they endow him with artificial or social seniority. There is the classic

[1] Both the folding of the arms across the chest and walking behind the elders show the respect the younger people have for the elders.

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brother (classificatory): the father's first, second, and third cousins are his 'brothers', and a daughter of any of these relatives is avoided for marriage. Coorgs remember their agnatic connexions even where they overflow the *okka*, and marriage with the daughter or sister of an agnatic relative is avoided.

Every *okka* has a distinct name, a fact which helps in the avoidance of incestuous relations. When a branch of an *okka* splits off and in course of time becomes a separate *okka*, there is no intermarriage between the parent-*okka* and the offspring-*okka*. Thus there are two Biddanḍa *okkas*, and there is no intermarriage between their members as they remember that they are agnatically related and that in the past they constituted a single *okka*.

Sometimes the possession of a common name by several *okkas* does not indicate the prevalence of any connexion between them. For instance, there are several *okkas* called Mukkāṭira, a name originally acquired, in each case, by the founder of the *okka* holding a certain office in a temple. In such a case, there is usually a prefix specifying which Mukkāṭira *okka* is meant: Kuṇjalagēri Mukkāṭira refers to the Mukkāṭira *okka* of Kunjalagēri village and not to any other Mukkāṭira *okka*.

A man is also prohibited from marrying the daughter of his mother's sister (classificatory). Terminologically a man's mother's sisters are identified with his mother, and their daughters with his sisters. The mother's line may be called the 'buried line', and it comes into prominence negatively in the avoidance of a mother's sister's daughter for marriage, and positively in the latter relative's being identified with the sister. Such accordance of importance to maternal relatives is an attempt to balance the enormous importance accorded to paternal relatives in a kinship-system the foundation of which is the patrilineal, patrilocal *okka*.

The only relative a man may marry is his cross-cousin, his mother's brother's daughter or his father's sister's daughter. Coorgs, like other speakers of the Dravidian languages, have a classificatory kinship terminology which accords with cross-cousin marriage.

Cross-cousin marriage is preferred and common. It is of the symmetrical variety though there seems to be a slight preference for marriage with the father's sister's daughter as compared with the mother's brother's daughter. A proverb tells us, 'The father's sister's daughter's body is sweet, the juice of the blue sugar-cane is

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It follows from the two rules that have been stated that the marriage of cross-cousins is permissible. Such marriages occur, probably with about the same frequency in all classes of Coorg society, poor and well-to-do, rural and urban. My informant gave it as his impression that it was frequently considered that cross-cousin marriages were more suitable than others as creating new bonds of intimacy and friendship between the families concerned. He was emphatic that property considerations have no part in determining the frequency of such marriages; the bride brings with her merely a trousseau, and no other property is involved. Cross-cousin marriage is of the symmetrical variety; no tendency can be seen towards asymmetry. While the linguistic terms for cross-cousins cover, beside the children of brothers and sisters, also such more distant relations as the children of a mother's parallel male cousins or of a father's parallel female cousins, my informant in referring to cross-cousin marriages generally meant marriages between people of the closest relation. In the incident discussed in the following paragraph, the male cross-cousin who takes a part is if possible the son of the bride's father's sister or of her mother's brother.

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That cross-cousin marriages were anciently the preferable and possibly the universal type is to be inferred from an incident that takes place at weddings. It may be described here fully rather than in its appropriate place below. When the bridegroom is about to lead his bride from her family's house after the wedding ceremony, he may be stopped before he crosses the threshold by a male cross-cousin of the bride's who refuses to let her leave the house until he has been given a present by the bridegroom. The cross-cousin may be of any age, even a child in arms, and the incident is now looked upon as a piece of festive sport. But it is significant that he says (not however in any set formula) that the girl belongs to him and he will not let her leave. The present given varies in accordance with the means of the parties, but usually takes the form of a rupee or a gold sovereign. It may be kept by the cross-cousin or may be tied by him in the bride's sari as a present to her. The latter seems to be usually the case.

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While the evidence of kinship terminology might be invoked to support our conclusions in the matter of cross-cousin marriage and would fully support them, it seems to be unnecessary to bring this forward since the material facts already adduced provide sufficient evidence. It seems unwise moreover to base a great deal on the evidence given by kinship terminologies in the Dravidian-speaking areas of India. They are practically identical in all the languages of the area, and the same terminologies are used by such ethnologically diverse communities as the mother-sibs of the Malabar coast, the father-sibs of most of the rest of the area in question, the Coorgs and the Todas who practise symmetrical cross-cousin marriage, and communities

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which practise an asymmetrical form of cross-cousin marriage. Until we have exact ethnological and linguistic accounts of many more communities of the area than we have now, any correlations found between institutions and terminology must rest under suspicion of being in part accidental and not due to a coordinated development of the two. The kinship terminology of the Coorgs forms an appendix to this paper.

Within the group of the blood-relations of a man or woman, marriage is allowed only with the cross-cousin, either real or classificatory. This implies that within this group one may not marry except in his own generation. The matter was stressed by my informants, since in some of the Kannada-speaking communities a man may marry the daughter of his elder sister, and the Coorgs wished to point out that this is not allowable for themselves.

It will be evident from Appendix II dealing with kinship terminology that kinship terms are applied to many more people than actual blood-relations (see especially App. II, 7). The ramifications tend to become very wide-spread, especially when marriages take place outside of the blood-group, and when a man marries more than once; e.g. in the latter case, a man's stepmother is called cikavvĕ, her sister is called by the same term, the husband of this latter woman is ayyĕ, and his children, whether by this woman or by another wife, are called by terms for 'brother' and 'sister', though they are in no way blood-relations to oneself. It remains to ask whether in such cases the Coorgs apply in the field of marriage the dictum: like designations involve like social relations.[1] My informant (not the same gentleman from whom most of the information in this paper was obtained) said that the rule should apply that marriage is prohibited between any two persons who apply to one another brother-sister terms or terms denoting relationships between different generations. This rule however is not adhered to in practice and it was easy to call to mind in a few moments half-a-dozen cases where marriages had taken place between persons related in this way by terminology but unrelated in blood. The rules that must not be broken are those two stated above: the sibs are exogamous, and marriage is forbidden between a couple who are related to one another by descent from a common female ancestor through females only. On the history of this disregard of terminological relationships little information was gained. My informant's guess that it is due to the influence of education and the 'British example', and so is a very modern thing, is of little value. Of the cases mentioned none could have occurred more than half-a-century ago. But, since there was no mention of any opposition to any of these marriages, it is probable that such

[1] Lowie, *Primitive Society*, p. 148.

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marriages had been taking place for many years before that time. It is of some significance too that a proverb was quoted illustrating this matter: ñaṇḍwku maṇḍe ille, koḍavēku ca:ce ille 'the crab has no head, the Coorg has no regard for kinship terms'. Such a proverb implies a rather long history for the social phenomenon in question. One factor making for disregard of what is obviously felt to be a rule of some validity is worth mentioning. In many cases a strict application of the rule would make it almost impossible for a man to find a suitable wife, even in a community of such a size as the Coorgs, and it must often be extremely convenient and even advantageous to all parties to disregard a brother-sister relationship which is based in no way on blood and may be felt as almost fictitious.

The age at which marriage takes place among the Coorgs is a matter for statistical investigation. It can only be said that girls are not married until after puberty and usually not for a number of years thereafter. The marriage song in main outline and in many of the details is traditionally fixed, needing to be adapted for any wedding only by inserting the appropriate names; it must be of considerable age and where it describes a different state of affairs from those now in vogue may be adduced as evidence of an older stage of the institutions in question, allowing for the possibility that it may be describing an ideal rather than any state that had an actual existence previously. In the song the girl who becomes the wife of the young man whose marriage is described is married five years after puberty. My informants are of the opinion that this represents an ideal, which is rather faithfully lived up to. Certainly marriages before the age of 17 or 18 years for the girl and before the age of 20 for the man are rather rare. It may be noted also that among the more well-to-do Coorgs it sometimes happens that a girl never marries. This may occur for various reasons, perhaps the first of which is that young men of the equivalent social status, for the same reasons that operate in Western society, find marriage economically difficult and tend to marry at a later age than is customary in other groups of the Coorgs. Consequently, a girl may not be asked for when she is in the full bloom of youth and gradually comes to be less desirable in comparison with younger girls. When this happens, a girl of this class may decide that it is better to stay in her own sib and wield there the influence that comes with advancing years and experience rather than snatch at any chance of marriage and enter into an unfamiliar environment where she will occupy for a long time, if not for the rest of her life, a position of secondary importance. If she arrives at such a decision, being a woman of sufficient strength of will to do so, she will undoubtedly be a strong enough character to persuade her family to agree with her. No stigma will attach to her in consequence which cannot be overcome with time and patience.

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even as small as the cuṇḍe-fruit, all from one to one hundred, after the child called Co:mavvē came to rule the house and in marriage to the child called Apāyyē. We will give (the coins).' With these words he hands over eleven pebbles.

Aruvē of woman's sib: ba:tu.
'I have received them (lit. they came).'

Aruvē of husband's sib: idari sa:ksipana.
'Here! take the witness-money.' He gives three annas to the woman's aruvē.

Aruvē of woman's sib: ba:tu.
'I have received them.'

After this ceremony the woman is taken with her belongings to her father's house.

If she should be leaving her husband by divorce, much the same formulas are used, the main difference being in giving the reason for her leaving.

APPENDIX II.

Coorg kinship terminology.

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The kinship system is of the type known as the Dakota-Iroquois system. A summary of the Coorg system follows:

1. There is no self-reciprocating terminology. In Ego's generation his siblings and classificatory parallel cousins on the one hand and his classificatory cross-cousins on the other are indicated by terms which denote age older than himself and younger than himself respectively. Consequently, none of the terms used within Ego's generation are self-reciprocals.

2. No term is found denoting an individual whose sex is unspecified. Collectives which class the sexes together are found in three cases (see U, Y, and Z in Table 2).

3. Siblings and classificatory parallel cousins are classed together in each generation.

4. In Ego's generation a dichotomy is made in classification on the basis of age older or younger than himself (see 1). In the first ascending generation, Ego's father's male siblings and parallel cousins are permissively dichotomized on the basis of age older or younger than the father's, and Ego's mother's female siblings and parallel cousins are permissively dichotomized on the basis of age older or younger than the mother's.

5. The father is distinguished from his brothers, and the mother from her sisters.

6. Ego's generation and the first ascending and descending generations show a use of terms perfectly in accord with a strict system of cross-cousin-marriage. Further, no terminological distinction is made between siblings and classificatory parallel cousins of any degree of remoteness, or between classificatory cross-cousins of any degree of remoteness. Consequently, in the first ascending generation there is a separate term (G) for the father's sisters and parallel female cousins, and this is used also for the mother's female cross-cousins and her male siblings' and parallel male cousins' wives. Similarly, there is a separate term (J) for the mother's brothers and parallel male cousins, and this is used also for the father's male cross-cousins and his female siblings' and parallel female cousins' husbands. In Ego's generation the classification of cross-cousin applies to all the children of those in the first ascending generation who are classed according to the preceding two sentences. In the first descending generation a distinction is made between two groups, (a) the children of one's siblings or parallel cousins of the same sex as oneself and of one's cross-cousins of the opposite sex from oneself (these are classed with Ego's

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children), and (b) the children of one's siblings or parallel cousins of the opposite sex from oneself and of one's cross-cousins of the same sex as oneself. Members of (a) are possible mates of members of (b). For (a) a collective term is found disregarding sex, i.e. 'children'.

7. The terms that would apply to Ego's mate's relatives if the mate were a cross-cousin apply also to those relatives when the mate is not a cross-cousin.

8. A step-mother is called by the same term as a sister of the mother, a step-father by the same term as a brother of the father. (This is not evidence for levirate and sororate, but would follow from a strict cross-cousin marriage system; see ref. [3], p. 125.)

9. Two classes in the first descending generation yield one class only in the second descending generation; there are two terms, one for each sex, for grandchildren. For these a collective term is found disregarding sex, as for 'children' in 6 above. Similarly, the second ascending generation is divided only on the basis of sex.

10. The third ascending generation, like the second, has two terms differentiated on the basis of sex. For the third descending generation there are no unitary terms, only phrases, see Z in Table 2.

11. All the above statements are valid whether Ego is male or female.

12. For husband and wife there are separate terms, *odeyā* and *ponnu* respectively.

Bibliography.

A bibliography of the meagre writings on the Coorgs will include the following as the most important items in English (there are no books on the subject in any other European language):

Rev. G. Richter, *Manual of Coorg* (Mangalore, Basel Mission Book Depository, 1870). This is the earliest account and must be taken into consideration despite its limitations; it is still available at the publishers.

Lewis Rice, *Mysore and Coorg* (Bangalore, Mysore Government Press, 1878); volume 3 on Coorg. This is an almost verbatim reprint of Richter's book, with few additions or changes of any importance.

Pandanda Muthanna, *Coorg and the Coorgs* (Siddhapur, Coorg, C. M. Ponnappa, 1931). A small book with some good material, but on the whole meagre and disappointing.

Dewan Bahadur L. K. Ananthakrishna Iyer, Presidential Address to the Anthropological Section of the Indian Science Congress, Hyderabad (Deccan), 1937. The Dewan Bahadur promised a book on Coorg similar to his *Cochin Tribes and Castes* and *Mysore Tribes and Castes*; since his lamented death in February 1937, it has been announced (Man, Vol. 37, No. 120) that his manuscript was at the time of his death almost completed. Pending the desired publication of this manuscript, it has seemed desirable to publish this account of one side of Coorg life, especially since in the printed presidential address there is one very serious misstatement. It is said there that among the Coorgs cross-cousin marriage is prohibited; this is definitely not the case, the evidence given in this paper will show that cross-cousin marriage must be considered to be the favored form among the Coorgs, either operating as such at some past period, or at least held as an ideal.

I must express my gratitude to Dr. David Mandelbaum for his criticisms and suggestions on numerous points in the paper.

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TABLE 1.

The Coorg kinship system. The terms corresponding to the letters entered in the chart are given in Table 2. The collateral lines have not been carried down through all the descending generations.

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TABLE 2. TERMINOLOGY MARKED IN TABLE 1 BY LETTERS.

A mutajjē.
B muta:yi.
C ajjē.
D ta:yi.
E apē.
F ayyē; if older than Ego's father, he may be called balliapē, if younger, coriapē.
G ma:vi^{n}; Ego's father's sister, as distinguished from others to whom this term applies, may be called tamma:vi^{n}.
H avvē.
J ma:vē^{n}; Ego's mother's brother, as distinguished from others to whom this term applies, may be called tamma:vē^{n}.
K cikavvē; if older than Ego's mother, she may be called balliavvē (cf. F) or dodḍavvē, if younger, bo:javvē.
L appē, used of those brothers and parallel male cousins who are older than Ego.
M akā, used of those sisters and parallel female cousins who are older than Ego.
N tammaṇē, used of those brothers and parallel male cousins who are younger than Ego.
O taige, used of those sisters and parallel female cousins who are younger than Ego.
P ba:vē, used of those male cross-cousins who are older than Ego.
Q Maciṇē, used of those male cross-cousins who are younger than Ego.
R mammā, used of those female cross-cousins who are much older than Ego.
S maciṇi or maciṇici, used of those female cross-cousins who are younger than or of about the same age as Ego.
T mo:vē^{n}.
U mo:va; T and U may be called collectively maka.
V maymā.
W maymā.
X Kurumo:vē^{n}.
Y Kurumo:va; X and Y may be called collectively kurumaka.
Z no unitary term; collectively called kurumakaḍa maka 'children of grandchildren'; with distinction of sex kurumo:vē^{n}ḍa mo:vē^{n} (or mo:va) 'son (or, daughter) of grandson' and kurumo:vaḍa mo:vē^{n} (or, mo:va) 'son (or, daughter) of granddaughter'.

Kinship

The system of kinship among the Coorgs is of the type called classificatory. The most important feature is the use of the same kinship terms for mother's brother and father-in-law on the one hand and for father's sister and mother-in-law on the other. The fundamental feature of the system is the application of the same kinship terms in addressing most persons of the same generation and sex. 601

Social Organization

The Coorgs have a council of elders called Takka Mukkyastam who act as the moral censors of their social affairs, though they are not invested with magisterial power by Government. The authority of the village Takkas extends over offences against social customs, non-attendance of public feasts, and improper conduct during the same, as for example, drunkenness. The offender has to appear before the village elders at the *ambala*, an open council room on the village green, where the matter is discussed. The presiding Takka pronounces the verdict which may amount to a fine of ten rupees. In the event of refusal to pay the amount, the offender may be excommunicated, when he may appeal to the district Takkas, and their decision is final. An outcaste Coorg may be reinstated on payment of the fine. The influence of the official class, and increasing knowledge of the law tend to subvert the authority of the Takkas, who relax their control by accommodating themselves to changed conditions, and do not venture on any excommunication. 623 692 [634] [178]

Funeral Ceremonies

The Coorgs bury their dead. The common people are buried in the village burial ground, and children in some reserved place near the home. Men of importance have a tomb built over their graves with a masonry bull, the emblem of Siva, surrounding it. When a man dies, messages are sent round to every house of the village community. Each house must at least send one male and one female member to render service on the occasion. The Ayava of the family has the direction of affairs of the ceremonies. Under his direction the corpse is washed and dressed by the man who has followed the funeral summons, if the deceased is a man, but if a woman, by the women. The handling of the dead by the funeral party does not ceremonially defile them. It is enough for them to bathe and change clothes on reaching home. The corpse is then carried to the hall and laid on a funeral bed near to which a lighted lamp is placed. The whole company gather round and break out in loud lamentations, beating the breast and tearing the hair. Guns are also fired in honour of the dead. Towards evening, the corpse is brought into the yard in an open bier, a little water is poured into its mouth by the relatives and a piece of money is deposited in a copper dish, containing a little coconut milk, saffron, rice 764 [203] [431]